



Telangana Kala Parishath

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To
The Secretary,
Ministry of Electronics and
Information Technology (MeitY),
Government of India, New Delhi – India.

Date: 31st, March 2026

Respected Sir/Madam,

Subject: Concerns regarding Free Speech and Democratic Safeguards in the Draft Amendments to the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021

I am writing this letter as a responsible citizen to express my serious concerns regarding the draft amendments released on 30 March 2026 to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. India is the world's largest democracy, and the strength of our democracy lies in protecting the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India. Any regulatory framework governing digital platforms must therefore carefully balance national security, public order, and individual liberty without creating fear among ordinary citizens.

My concerns are based on the following issues:

- 1) The proposed Rule 3(4), which appears to make every future advisory, guideline, or clarification issued by the Ministry binding on intermediaries, may create excessive executive control over online speech. This may result in platforms removing lawful content merely to protect their legal immunity, which could indirectly restrict the voices of ordinary citizens.
- 2) The expansion of oversight mechanisms to include user-generated content relating to news and current affairs raises concerns that ordinary citizens expressing opinions may be treated on par with institutional publishers. This may discourage public participation in democratic discussions and weaken civic engagement.

3) The provisions relating to data retention may also create apprehensions among citizens regarding privacy and surveillance. A democracy must ensure that citizens feel safe to express opinions without fear of prolonged monitoring unless clearly justified by law.

4) Further, the short consultation period of 15 days for such significant amendments may not be sufficient for meaningful public participation. Laws affecting millions of digital users deserve wider discussion involving civil society, digital rights organisations, journalists, legal experts, and the general public.

5) India has always stood as a moral voice for democratic values in the world. At a time when global discussions are increasingly focusing on digital freedoms and democratic rights, it is important that India continues to be seen as a nation that protects debate, dissent, creativity, satire, and independent thought.

In this regard, I respectfully request the Government of India to consider the following:

- a) To reconsider provisions that may indirectly restrict lawful speech of citizens.*
- b) To ensure that any content regulation strictly follows due process as laid down by the Supreme Court.*
- c) To extend the public consultation period to enable wider stakeholder participation.*
- d) To ensure parliamentary discussion before implementing changes that significantly affect digital freedoms.*
- e) To create safeguards ensuring that these rules do not unintentionally create a chilling effect on free expression, academic discussion, journalism, and democratic debate.*

India's digital future must be built on trust, transparency, and constitutional morality. A free society progresses through dialogue, not silence; through participation, not fear; and through liberty, not overregulation. I submit this representation in the larger public interest and in the spirit of strengthening India's democratic values.

Thanking you.



**Yours sincerely,
RajaRao Pagidipalli**